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NASA Procedural Requirements

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2006**COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY**

Position Classification

Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital Management

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Preface

P.1 Purpose

a. NASA establishes or abolishes positions and assigns duties and responsibilities to employees in order to accomplish the Agency's mission. The NASA Supplemental Classification System (NSCS) recognizes the distinctive aspects of NASA work situations within the broader context of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) occupational series definitions.

b. This NPR establishes the responsibilities, procedures, and guidelines for the NASA occupational structure, definitions of the subgroups comprising the NSCS, position documentation and titling practices, classification appeals, and job grading appeals. It provides Agency direction which should be used in conjunction with the referenced statutory and regulatory requirements. Center Personnel Offices should be consulted for further information and guidance.

P.2 Applicability

This NPR is applicable to NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities. Unless otherwise indicated, use of the word Center(s) in the text of the NPR includes NASA Headquarters, and any reference to Center Director(s) includes the Assistant Administrator for Institutional and Corporate Management.

P.3 Authority

- a. 5 U.S.C., Part III, Subpart D, Chapters 51 and 53; Subpart F, Chapter 71.
- b. 5 CFR, Parts 511 and 532.
- c. Civil Service Commission Examination Announcement Number 252 B, Parts A and B, December 6, 1960.

P.4 References

NPD 3000, Management of Human Resources.

Introduction to the Position Classification Standards (TS-107), August 1991.

P.5 Cancellation

NPR 3510.5A dated March 4, 1987.

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Assistant Administrator for
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Chapter 1. Responsibility

1.1 Administrator

The Administrator retains the authority to classify positions above grade General Schedule (GS) 15.

1.2 Center Directors

Each Center Director is responsible for developing and implementing a vigorous position classification program, consistent with applicable law and regulations and conditions or limitations imposed by the Administrator or designee.

1.3 Director, Personnel Division

The Director, Personnel Division, Office of Human Resources, NASA Headquarters, is delegated the following authority:

1.3.1. Monitor actions taken as a result of OPM decisions. Review proposals, comments, and recommendations submitted in connection with NASA or OPM-generated actions.

1.3.2. Review personnel management information system materials and organization structure.

1.3.3. Review and/or reclassify Federal Wage System (FWS) and GS positions at grades 15 and below. This authority may be redelegated.

1.3.4. Review and determine the final Agency decision on classification and job-grading appeals submitted by employees in the above positions.

1.3.5. Conduct occupational studies and define the basic code structure of NASA occupational specializations (NASA Supplemental Classification System (NSCS)).

1.3.6. Review the classification program of each Center, conduct onsite program reviews and evaluations, and recommend or direct changes as appropriate after consultation with the appropriate Associate Administrator.

1.3.7. Recommend to the Administrator, after consultation with the appropriate Associate Administrator, revocation or restoration of all or part of the delegation of authority to a Center, should this action be deemed necessary.

1.3.8. Recommend classification of positions above grade GS-15 to the Administrator or designee.

1.3.9. Classify Center Personnel Director positions at grade GS-15 or below.

1.3.10. Review and approve Center requests to delegate classification authority to other than qualified personnel specialists.

1.4 Assistant Administrator for Human Resources

The Associate Administrator for Human Resources and Education is delegated the authority to make decisions on job grading appeals from FWS employees when no decision has been made within 60 days after the employee's application is filed, if so requested by the employee.

1.5 Supervisors

Supervisors have a continuing responsibility for the following:

1.5.1. Determining the need for positions.

1.5.2. Deciding what the duty and responsibility content of each position will be and ensuring that position descriptions are prepared when required and maintained in a current and accurate state.

1.5.3. Adding, removing, or changing assignments at any time and ensuring that corrective action is initiated promptly when warranted.

1.5.4. Informing employees concerning their assigned duties and responsibilities and ensuring that employees have access to their position descriptions.

1.6 Center Personnel Directors

Center Personnel Directors must ensure the provision of staff support, guidance for management, and a capability for the classification and evaluation of positions. The following operations are necessary:

1.6.1. Periodic position classification surveys of all positions (at least once every 3 years).

1.6.2. An internal system for adjudication of position classification appeals.

Chapter 2. NASA Position Classification

2.1 NASA Supplemental Classification System (NSCS)

2.1.1. NASA developed and implemented NSCS to distinguish aspects of NASA work situations to a greater degree than the more broadly defined categories of work and occupations defined within the Governmentwide position classification scheme.

2.1.2. NSCS is divided into 10 occupational groups based on the nature of work performed and knowledge required. The schematic and definitions are established and maintained by the Director, Personnel Division, NASA Headquarters, or designee.

2.1.3. The 700 Group is unique in that each of the specializations that comprise it has a precise definition. The 700 Group encompasses the professional scientific and engineering positions that accomplish and direct the basic NASA mission. The acronym, AST, which means aerospace technology, is used widely in NASA to denote positions engaged in work of the 700 Group because of its aerospace orientation.

2.1.4. The refinement of the 700 Group is intended to facilitate the recruitment of scientists and engineers. The NSCS title and specialty definition describes the specific nature of the work; defines the skills, knowledge, and qualification requirements for these positions; and becomes the primary tool for recruitment and hiring.

2.2. NSCS Occupational Groups

The NSCS requires placing positions into occupational groupings as follows:

000 Group Reserved

100 Group Federal System Wage (FWS) (e.g., WG, WS, WL, XP, XS, XL, XD, and XN) jobs for which compensation is on the basis of prevailing locality wage rates.

200 Group Professional scientific, engineering, and other technical positions performing work not directly related to NASA's aerospace research and development mission.

300 Group Technical support positions engaged in nonprofessional technical work requiring primarily application of an intensive practical knowledge of the techniques and theories of a subject-matter area and/or the characteristics and capabilities, and operation of a variety of specialized equipment associated with that area.

400 Group Reserved

500 Group Clerical and related support positions engaged in clerical and support work requiring application of established clerical or administrative systems, procedures, and techniques of a subject-matter area or program.

600 Group Professional administrative positions engaged in work requiring application of analytical ability, judgment, and knowledge of the principles, concepts, methodology, and objectives of a complex subject-matter or program area.

700 Group Professional engineering, scientific, or other technical positions engaged in research, development, operations, and related work pertaining to the basic NASA mission.

800 Group Reserved

900 Group Life sciences positions engaged in scientific and/or health-oriented work not directly related to aerospace research and development and requiring application of knowledge, skills, and techniques of health science, nursing, or biological science.

2.3 Revision and Addition of NASA Codes in NSCS Hundred Groups

2.3.1. Positions Classified to Groups Except the 700 Group. The specializations and their corresponding codes, in the occupational groups other than 700, are changed as needed. In the case of OPM-influenced changes, the Director, Personnel Division, will typically initiate the required action. A Center may initiate a change as follows:

2.3.1.1. Temporarily code the position in the pending classification code at the beginning of the appropriate hundred group (i.e., 01).

2.3.1.2. Refer the case to the Director, Personnel Division, with a copy of a representative full performance-level position description, or description of the work and the needed qualifications, and other relevant background information.

2.3.2. Positions Classified to the 700 Group. The specialties and their corresponding codes in the 700 Group are changed as needed in response to emerging or changing programs and missions. The principal criteria for recognition of a specialty are the existence of a significant amount of work which has been defined and the expectation that it will continue for a reasonable period. A Center may propose a change to the group, as follows:

2.3.2.1. Temporarily code the positions in the pending classification -90 through -99 codes at the end of the appropriate subgroup, or to the -09 specialty (e.g., the pending code for GS-7/9 entry-level positions not fitting properly into a specific specialty) of the appropriate subgroup.

2.3.2.2. When the number of positions assigned to a 90's code (e.g., 715-91 or 700-92) reaches 10, the Center should submit a proposal for establishment of a new specialty to the Director, Personnel Division, with relevant background material.

2.4 Titles

2.4.1. NSCS titles are assigned to positions based on the NSCS classification code. The titles and codes are established and maintained by the Director, Personnel Division, or designee.

2.4.2. For positions classified to occupational groups of NSCS other than the 700 Group, the Civil Service classification is determined, and the tables and codes maintained by the Director, Personnel Division, will indicate the appropriate NSCS classification code.

2.4.3. For positions in the 700 Group, the titling process involves determining which NSCS specialty definition best describes the work of the position. This determination dictates the NSCS title, code number, Civil Service series, and title for the position. For example, a position meeting the definition of specialty number 709-22 would be titled AST-Physiologist.

2.4.4. When a position in the 700 Group is classified to a series for which the matching OPM series has no prescribed title (e.g., 745-07, AST-Mission Specialist Astronaut, 709-33, AST-Solar System Analysis) the NSCS title is also used as the OPM title.

2.4.5. For purposes other than official personnel records, NASA Centers may use organizational or functional titles in addition to the OPM and the NSCS titles.

2.5 Position Documentation

2.5.1. The prescribed position description format for positions covered by published Factor Evaluation System classification standards is specified in Appendix 3 of the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, Factor Evaluation System.

2.5.2. The position description must include the major duties of the position in terms of the applicable factor pattern set forth in the governing classification standards for that particular occupation.

2.5.3. The duties and responsibilities constituting all NASA positions at GS-15 and below must be officially documented on a NASA Form 692, Position Description.

2.5.4. An adequate position description will provide all the information needed to determine the series, title, and grade of the position when the appropriate classification criteria are applied to the position.

2.5.5. Evaluation statements provide a written record of the basis for the classification of certain categories of positions and shall be prepared for the following:

2.5.5.1. Supervisory positions.

2.5.5.2. Positions that exceed the published grade-level criteria in the governing standard.

2.5.5.3. Positions for which there are no specific published grade-level criteria (e.g., GS-301, GS-341, GS-345).

2.5.5.4. Positions whose classifications reflect in some measure the impact of the incumbent on the position.

2.5.5.5. Positions that are borderline GS/FWS.

2.6 Distribution of the Position Description

Copies of position descriptions (NASA Form 692) are to be distributed as follows:

2.6.1. The signed original is retained by the classification office.

2.6.2. One copy is placed with SF-52, Request for Personnel Action, for the official personnel folder.

2.6.3. One copy is given to the employee.

2.6.4. One copy is given to the supervisor of the position.

2.6.5. Additional copies may be provided for organizational files, series or occupational files, and operating official's office files. Evaluation statements are filed with the official position record in the classification office. The evaluation statement need not be distributed to other points.

2.7 Classification Files

The office responsible for classification should maintain the official files of original position descriptions. The file may also include charts of organizational segments presenting basic information.

2.8 Classification Appeals for General Schedule (GS) Positions

2.8.1. An employee in a GS position may appeal initially to either the Center Personnel Director; the Director, Personnel Division, NASA Headquarters; or bypass the NASA appeal levels and file an appeal directly with OPM.

2.8.2. A classification decision made by the Center Personnel Director may be appealed to the Director, Personnel Division, or to the appropriate OPM Regional Office, or both sequentially. Also, a classification decision made by the Director, Personnel Division, may be appealed to the appropriate OPM Regional Office.

2.8.3. Filing Instructions and Time Limits

2.8.3.1. Employees are encouraged, but not required, to file all appeals through each lower level. By doing so, the opportunity is afforded for corrective action, if warranted. Also, the appeal process is expedited because the opportunity is provided for each level to include with the appeal additional information that is needed by the succeeding level. This includes such material as supplemental information clarifying the position's duties and responsibilities, the Center's and Agency's analysis of the position, and a copy of the official position description.

2.8.3.2. Within NASA, a written decision will be provided within 30-calendar days after all required information has been collected. When an appeal addressed to the Director, Personnel Division, is filed through the Center Personnel Director, it must be forwarded by that official within 30-calendar days of date of receipt, unless acted upon favorably in the meantime.

2.8.3.3. In instances where the employee's appeal has been addressed to the Center Personnel Director or the Director, Personnel Division, the addressee has the option of forwarding the appeal to the appropriate regional office of OPM without issuing a final decision. In such cases, the appeal must be forwarded to OPM within 30-calendar days of receipt, and the employee must be notified in writing of this intention and his or her concurrence obtained. If the employee does not concur, the appeal will be canceled.

2.8.3.4. When an appeal addressed to the OPM Regional Office is filed through Agency appeal levels (i.e., the Center

Personnel Director and/or the Director, Personnel Division) it must be forwarded to the OPM Regional Office within 60-calendar days from date of initial receipt, unless one of the Agency levels acts favorably on it in the meantime.

2.8.4. Protection of Retroactive Benefits

2.8.4.1. An appeal decision reversing a classification action that resulted in a downgrade or loss of compensation may be made retroactive, providing the initial classification appeal is filed with either one of the Agency levels or OPM no later than 15-calendar days after the effective date of the reclassification action. Also, any further appeal must be filed no later than 15-calendar days after the effective date of the reclassification action.

2.8.4.2. OPM may extend the time limits stated in paragraph 2.8.4.1 if an appellant can show that he or she was not notified of these limits and was not otherwise aware of them or that circumstances beyond his or her control prevented filing within these limits.

2.8.5. Information Required When Appealing Within NASA

2.8.5.1. A classification appeal must be made in writing, signed by the appellant, and addressed to the level that the appellant selects.

2.8.5.2. An employee's appeal letter must include the following:

- a. Employee's mailing address and office telephone number.
- b. The number, title, pay plan, series, and grade of the position.
- c. The organizational unit and location of the employee's position.
- d. The title, series, grade, or other classification action sought.
- e. Factual presentation of the reasons why appellant believes his or her position is improperly classified.
- f. A copy of the official position description.
- g. Name, address, and business telephone number of the employee's representative if a representative has been designated.

2.8.6. Effective Date of Appeal Decisions

2.8.6.1. A change brought about by an appeal decision (of either NASA appeal level or OPM) takes effect no earlier than the date of the appeal decision and no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period following the date of decision unless permission has been obtained from OPM for further delay. A classification action may not be effected retroactively.

2.8.6.2. Center Personnel Directors must furnish the Director, Personnel Division, a copy of the SF-50 effecting any change resulting from a decision rendered by the Director, Personnel Division.

2.8.7. **Notifying Incumbents Concerning Appeal Rights.** When a classification appeal decision is unfavorable to the employee, the employee must be advised concerning further rights of appeal within NASA and to OPM, including the right to appeal directly to OPM if desired. If such a decision would result in loss of grade or compensation, the decision must also inform the employee of the necessity to file any subsequent classification appeal with OPM, no later than 15-calendar days after the effective date of the reclassification in order to protect retroactive pay benefits that he or she might be entitled to in connection with the appeal. The time limit for filing a subsequent appeal with the Director, Personnel Division, may be extended if the employee is able to demonstrate that he or she was not notified of these time limits or that there were extenuating circumstances.

2.8.8. **Reporting OPM Appeal Decisions.** Center Personnel Directors should furnish the Director, Personnel Division, an information copy of appeal decisions rendered by regional offices of OPM.

2.9 Job-Grading Appeals of FWS Jobs

2.9.1. An employee in an FWS job may at any time file an application for a review of the correctness of the grade, title, or series of his or her job by the Director, Personnel Division. If the employee is not satisfied with the NASA decision, he or she may appeal to OPM. An FWS employee may not appeal directly to OPM without first going through the NASA appeal process.

2.9.2. Filing Instructions and Time Limits

2.9.2.1. Employees are encouraged, but not required, to file applications for review of their jobs through the Center Personnel Director. This provides an opportunity for resolution or corrective action, if warranted. Also, the job-grading review process is expedited because the opportunity is provided for each level to include with the application additional information which is needed by the next level; e.g., official position description, the Center's analysis of the position.

2.9.2.2. Within NASA, a written decision on an application filed with the Director, Personnel Division, should be provided within 60-calendar days of the date the employee files an application for review. If a decision has not been issued within the 60-day timeframe, the employee may request the Associate Administrator for Human Resources and Education to make the final decision on the job.

2.9.2.3. If an employee elects to file an appeal with OPM after NASA has issued its final decision, the appeal must be filed within 15-calendar days of the date of receipt of the decision; and the employee must specify that part of the NASA decision with which he or she disagrees.

2.9.3. Protection of Retroactive Benefits

2.9.3.1. A NASA review decision that reverses a job-grading decision that resulted in loss in grade or pay may be made retroactive to the effective date of the action being reviewed for the change, provided the employee's application was filed within 15-calendar days of the effective date of the change to lower grade. However, when the NASA decision raises the grade of the job above its grade immediately preceding the downgrading, retroactivity applies only to the extent of restoration to the grade immediately preceding the downgrading.

2.9.3.2. OPM may extend the time limit for filing an appeal if circumstances beyond the employee's control prevented him or her from filing it within 15-calendar days, or the employee was not notified or was not otherwise aware of the time limit for filing an appeal.

2.9.4. Information Required When Applying for a Job-Grading Review Within NASA

2.9.4.1. An application for review must be in writing, signed by the requester, and addressed to the level that the requester selects.

2.9.4.2. An employee's letter of application for review must include the following:

- a. Employee's name, mailing address, and office telephone number.
- b. The number, title, pay plan, series, and grade of the job.
- c. Organizational unit and location of the employee's job.
- d. The title, series, and grade or other job grading action sought.
- e. Factual presentation of the reasons why the employee believes his or her job is erroneously graded.
- f. A copy of the official job description.
- g. Name, address, and business telephone number of the employee's representative, if a representative has been designated.

2.9.4.3. In instances where the employee has filed the application for review through the Center Personnel Director, the Center Personnel Director is encouraged to attempt resolution at that level before forwarding it to the Director, Personnel Division, for a final decision. The employee may file with OPM only after NASA has rendered its decision on the application.

2.9.5. Effective Date of NASA Decisions

2.9.5.1. When the final NASA decision on an application for review will result in a change, the decision takes effect no earlier than the date of the decision and no later than the beginning of the first pay period, which begins after the 60th day from the date the application was filed.

2.9.5.2. Center Personnel Directors must furnish the Director, Personnel Division, a copy of the SF-50 effecting any change resulting from a decision rendered by the Director, Personnel Division.

2.9.6. Notifying Incumbents Concerning Appeal Rights. When a decision by the Director, Personnel Division, on an application for review will lead to loss of grade or pay for the employee, the employee must be promptly notified of the decision and of his or her rights to appeal to OPM. The notice must inform the employee of the need to file further

appeal within 15-calendar days of the effective date of the change in order to establish or preserve his or her rights to adjustment.

2.9.7. Reporting OPM Appeal Decisions. Center Personnel Directors should furnish the Director, Personnel Division, an information copy of appeal decisions